



House Education Newsletter

MARCH 2006

Legislative Week in Review

We've officially hit day 26, which means there are only 14 Legislative Days left in the 2006 Session! Health clinics that provide free services to uninsured Georgians were recognized on Monday. House Bill 1272 provided these clinics a sales tax exemption for supplies and services they purchase. Lawmakers wanted to extend to these clinics the same helping hand which they provide to others.

Lawmakers set aside a combined sales and energy star tax holiday set for the weekend of August 3rd through 6th. The extension combines the school sales tax holiday which allows for state sales tax exemptions on school supplies, clothing, footwear, and computer tools up to specified amounts with the energy star tax holiday authorizing tax free purchases of energy efficient items up to 1500 dollars for personal non-commercial use. The measure will simplify book-keeping for retail

stores, the department of revenue, and consumers by combining the holidays; a total revenue consumer savings of 11.28 billion dollars state wide is the expected result of the action.



After a lengthy debate, the House, on Wednesday, passed a bill which authorizes optometrists to prescribe antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals. Proponents argued that broadening optometric scope of practice will help reduce the cost of overall eye health care. Additionally legislation was passed which updates guidelines governing the qualifications of audiologists and speech pathologists. House members quickly approved the addition of 10 motor cycle troopers to

patrol the interstates inside Atlanta's perimeter. The action was taken because motorcycles are one of the best ways to patrol Atlanta's frequently congested highways. On Thursday, the House signed off on a major piece of education legislation before adjourning late that afternoon. With passage of House Bill 1358 a long anticipated plan to reduce class sizes may finally go into effect. The measure stipulates in very clear terms that the maximum class size for kindergarten not exceed 18 children. Grades one through three cannot have more than 21 students and fourth and fifth grade classes can't seat more than 28 pupils. The maximum size for middle school is set at no more than 32.



Speaker Emeritus, Terry Coleman



Serving as the voice for the people of House District 144, which includes Bleckley, Dodge and Wilcox Counties, as well as parts of Ben Hill and Pulaski, Representative Terry Coleman has a long record of service with the Georgia General Assembly. In fact, he is its longest serving member- having been first elected to the Legislature in 1972. Just recently, this great public servant announced his retirement from his role in the House of Representatives, making this his last Session under the Gold Dome. His legislative duties have consisted of a great many roles, from various Chairmanships of House Committees to serving as the Speaker of the House during the 2003-2004 Legislative Sessions.

From 1978-1986 he served as the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, the following Session he chaired the Natural Resources Committee. His legislative service during the 1989-1990 Session included the Chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee. In 1991 he was named Chairman of the House Appropriations

Committee, and played an instrumental role in the budget writing process. During his final term as a member of the House of Representatives, Coleman's duties involve membership on the Appropriations, Banks & Banking and Insurance Committees.



Born and raised in Dodge County, Representative Coleman graduated from Dodge County High School in 1961. From there, he went on to attend Reinhardt College where he earned an Associates Degree. He later obtained his Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice before earning his Juris Doctorate from the Woodrow Wilson College of Law. He is currently employed by Coleman and Company Benefits, Inc. which deals with business insurance.

Upon retiring from the General Assembly, the legislator hopes to spend more time working with his sons in the family business. He has also been a member of the Eastman Volunteer Fire Department for the past 23 years!

His service to his community doesn't end on the House Floor, he also holds membership on the Board of Directors for the Bank of Dodge County and the Colony Bank Corporation. He continues to play an active role in the Huddle House Franchise in Eastman and McCrae. In the past, he served on the Mercer Medical School Board of Governors and is a former President of the Eastman Chamber of Commerce. Representative Coleman is married to Carol Cofield Coleman; they have 2 children and 2 grandchildren. The Colemans are members of the First Methodist Church of Eastman.



Week in Review continued...

In an effort to bring more professionalism to the municipal court system House Bill 1288, which mandates training for municipal court clerks, was adopted by a unanimous vote. Also adopted

was an exhaustive package dealing with protocols governing medical services. Additionally, a host of other issues ranging from modernizing and clarifying provisions governing the emanci-

pation of youths, to revising certain fees involving nursing homes were approved from this week's calendar.

Brent Cranfield

Intern Spotlight: Whitney Vail



Interning with the House of Representatives has been a wonderful experience for me. As a Georgia Tech student, I started work here most excited about getting a short break from classes; I quickly discovered, however that my responsibilities for the Retirement Committee would be far from easy. My first week here, the Committee passed out 10 bills in their first meeting! Granted, they had been working on the bills all year, which was why little discussion was necessary, I was simply overwhelmed by the number of steps that had to be taken by the Committee Aide before those bills were actually ready to move forward. Updating databases, turning in reports, and filing all the right paperwork: this is the kind of work that I do on a daily basis.

I work directly under Sheila Gove, who functions as Chairman Bridges' Administrative Assistant, as well as the Retirement Committee Aide, so I also assist her with other tasks, such as Chairman Bridges' constituency service. Having in the past fallen victim to the slander we sometimes hear about politics and politicians, I was surprised to discover how much Chairman Bridges, and all of the other House Representatives, for that matter, truly are concerned about their constituents. Chairman Bridges is always discussing bills with the people in his district, trying to help them with any problems they may be facing, and meeting groups of his constituents and arranging these types of meetings. This aspect of my job has taught me much more than just the bill-writing and committee process; more importantly I have learned what it means to work for the House of Representatives and that is serving the citizens of this state. Thanks and have a great Session!